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COUNSELOR CONNECTION

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Students seeking fall aid should file FAFSA now

Students seeking college aid for the 2008–2009 school year should file the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov as soon as possible.

As mentioned in the last edition of the *Counselor Connection*, 2008–2009 paper FAFSAs will not be available for schools to order via FSAPubs. Students will be able to obtain a paper FAFSA by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center toll free at 800.433.3243. Students may request up to three copies of the paper application and should receive their FAFSAs in three to seven days.

The FAFSA is used to apply for most need-based state, federal and institutional aid programs. Some student aid funds are limited, and those who apply early have the best chance to receive all of the aid for which they may qualify.

Students who file the FAFSA online will get their results 7 to 14 days faster than those who file by mail.

College-bound students should follow checklist

You might want to pass this information to your seniors. It will help them stay on track in their college preparation.

February/March

- ☐ Submit midyear grades if the colleges to which you've applied require them.
- ☐ Send in any required deposits.
- ☐ If you've been accepted by more than one college but haven't heard from your first choice, contact that school about a decision before making any nonrefundable deposits to other schools.
- ☐ If you've decided which school you want to attend, notify that college of your decision. Let any other colleges that have accepted you know about your decision.

April/May

- ☐ Follow up on your financial aid package.
- ☐ If you're going to need student loans, compare the benefits offered by the various lenders your college uses.
- ☐ Take AP tests if you're enrolled in AP courses.
- ☐ If you're on a waiting list at a school you really want to attend, ask the director of admissions how to strengthen your application.

June

- ☐ Let your high school counselor know which college you're going to so the school can send in final grades, class rank and proof of graduation.
- ☐ Send thank-you notes to counselors, teachers and others who helped you through the process.
- ☐ Prepare a budget for the coming school year.



New scholarship program targets potential teachers

A new scholarship program administered by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) provides college funding for high school seniors who want to teach math, special education, general science or English/language arts in the state.

The Alabama Teacher Recruitment Incentive

Program, or ATRIP, will provide \$20,000 scholarships to 100 Alabama high school seniors each year. Scholarships are also available to Alabamians seeking alternative teacher certification.

ATRIP scholarships are what are considered conversion scholarship/loans. That means recipients



who don't complete their teacher certification or who don't fulfill their teaching obligation must repay the scholarship. Recipients who drop below full-time status or don't maintain a specified GPA must also repay the loan. The interest rate is 8 percent.

Among the requirements of the scholarship are that a recipient must:

- Be a legal resident of Alabama and a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or qualified alien.
- Be enrolled full-time in a teacher education program approved by the Alabama State Department of Education.
- Agree to teach in an Alabama public school each year for which the scholarship is received.
- Notify ACHE in writing within 10 days of withdrawing from a course of study or of any change of address.

For more complete information about ATRIP, visit www.atrip.alabama.gov.

ACHE offers several other student financial aid programs

ACHE administers other programs that can help Alabamians pay for college. They include the Alabama Student Assistance Program grant, which provides up to \$2,500 to needy undergraduate students attending eligible Alabama colleges. To be considered, a student must file the FAFSA.

The Alabama Student Grant is a similar program that offers smaller grants for students attending certain private colleges in the State. It provides up to \$1,200 per year if funds are available. Applications may be obtained from private colleges' financial aid offices.

A third ACHE program provides education funds to the dependent or spouse of a police officer or

firefighter killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty in Alabama. This program is for undergraduates attending a public Alabama college. It covers tuition, fees, books and supplies, with no limit on the amount awarded. Students may contact ACHE at P.O. Box 302000, Montgomery, AL 36130-2000 or (334) 242-2273 for an application.

Another ACHE program provides tuition grants for undergraduate study to members of the Alabama National Guard. Guard members can receive up to \$1,000 per year through this program. Students may contact a local Guard unit for an application.